



STATE OF NEW YORK DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH

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TO: Hospitals, Local Health Departments
FROM: NYSDOH Bureau of Communicable Disease Control

Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome (SARS) ADVISORY

Please distribute immediately to the Infection Control Department, Emergency Department, Employee Health Service, Infectious Disease Department, Internists, Pediatricians, Family Practice Physicians, Outpatient Clinic Staff, Director of Nursing, Medical Director, Laboratory Service, and all patient care areas.

Background

The Chinese Ministry of Health has reported a possible case of severe acute respiratory syndrome (SARS) in a 20-year-old woman who works as a nurse in a Beijing hospital. The woman reported onset of fever, cough, and chills on April 5, was hospitalized on April 7 and was moved to another Beijing hospital on April 14th and placed in intensive care. On April 22, she was diagnosed as a possible SARS case based on positive test results for antibodies to SARS-CoV in serum. The source of the patient's infections is unknown at this time. An epidemiologic investigation is underway and has identified 171 close contacts that are under medical observation. Five of these contacts have developed fever and have been placed in isolation.

Purpose

In light of this report, the New York State Department of Health along with the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) are recommending that U.S. physicians and primary care providers maintain a greater index of suspicion for SARS.

Recommendations:

1. Continue the use of Standard Respiratory Precautions when evaluating patients with respiratory symptoms.
2. Elicit a travel history on all patients being evaluated with respiratory symptoms and fever. Place patients who have traveled to Mainland China with above symptoms on Airborne and Contact Precautions with the use of face shields pending results of medical evaluation.

3. Patients considered at **high risk for SARS-CoV** infection are those who:
- a. Require hospitalization for radiographically confirmed pneumonia or acute respiratory distress syndrome (ARDS) ,
- AND**
- b. Who have a history of travel to mainland China (or close contact with an ill person with a history of recent travel to mainland China) in the 10 days before onset of symptoms.
4. When a patient is identified as high risk for SARS-CoV:
- a. Continue airborne and contact precautions along with eye protection.
 - b. Immediately report the patient to the local health department (LHD).
 - c. Laboratory testing can be arranged through the LHD. If the LHD cannot be reached, call the NYSDOH Bureau of Communicable Disease Control at 518-473-4436 during business hours, or the NYSDOH Duty Officer after-hours at 1-866-881-2809.
 - d. The state and local health departments will work with the hospital to identify, evaluate, and monitor relevant contacts of the patient, as needed.
5. When the patient is considered not to be at high risk for SARS-CoV after medical evaluation, continue Standard Respiratory Precautions.

Additional Information about SARS

Guidelines and recommendations for SARS reporting, infection control, and clinical and laboratory evaluation can be found on the New York State Department of Health Provider Network. Detailed attachments include information on Standard Respiratory Precautions, Reporting Potential SARS Cases, Clinical Algorithms, and Laboratory Testing for SARS at the NYSDOH Wadsworth Center can be located on the Health Provider Network at:

https://commerce.health.state.ny.us/hpn/hanweb/sars/sars_clinicians.html as well as the public website at http://www.health.state.ny.us/nysdoh/sars/sars_reporting/index.html.

Providers should register for a NYSDOH Health Provider Network (HPN) account as this system is used as a principal means for disseminating and gathering important and sensitive information on urgent public health issues. To sign up for an HPN account, please call 1-866-529-1890.

Providers should regularly check the following websites for the most current information on SARS:

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention:

www.cdc.gov/ncid/sars

World Health Organization:

www.who.int/en

New York State Department of Health:

www.health.state.ny.us